

The Dial

Sustainability

Green college

Rather typically of Corpus, over the past year there has been a lot of quiet but determined activity to respond to the Climate Emergency and put Corpus on a less carbon intensive path in future years.

The seriousness of the changes to our climate and ecosystems and the exponential acceleration of impacts has been a call to arms for the College. Most importantly, this has been a collaborative enterprise where Junior Members, Fellows and staff have all had a role to play. In particular, Junior Members have made a critical contribution and injected a sense of rational urgency into proceedings. The College thanks all of those involved for this.

So, what have we been doing? The first phase of this project was to examine the Endowment, upon which the College relies so heavily to fulfill its charitable purpose, and to devise a policy that will move it gradually towards a much more sustainable basis in the future. In Trinity 2019, Governing Body adopted an Endowment Sustainability Policy which took a number of important steps.

Firstly, we have committed to the United Nations six Principles of Responsible Investing ('PRI'). Whilst we are not going to affiliate with the UN on this for cost reasons, we want to replicate these principles in the way we manage the Endowment going forward.

Secondly, we have committed to moving the Endowment's more liquid investments towards strategies which are PRI compliant and in the case of all index investments we will invest only in 'best in class' ESG (Environment, Social & Governance) compliant funds. We have been working with Cambridge Colleges and our passive investment manager, Amundi SA, to devise a strategy which achieves full divestment from carbon intensive industries, reduces carbon emissions by 40% and doubles 'green revenues'. We hope that this fund will be up and running in 2020 and that it will become a core pillar for our Endowment. We have prohibited investment in munitions and other industries that do not align with our charitable purpose and mission: pornography, tobacco and the extraction of thermal coal or tar sands.

Finally, we have committed to engage with the farmers and tenants on our landed estates to promote greater sustainability and biodiversity. Whilst it will take some time to shift the portfolio fully in this direction, these goals are expansive and go beyond the box ticking and 'greenwashing' so often seen in the corporate and investment world.

The second phase has been to look at the College site, our wider buildings and 'operations' to formulate a sustainability policy which will gradually reduce our carbon footprint and focus our minds on being more sustainable in every aspect of College life.

The President set up a Sustainability Working Group in Michaelmas 2019, which consisted of Fellows, the Domestic Bursar, the Bursar and representatives from the MCR and the JCR. Lots of ideas were suggested with an emphasis on taking targeted action in areas where we can get immediate results. It was remarkable that in the end the policy was written by the Junior Members (with occasional edits from the SCR!) but essentially this piece of work is something which has been created by the student body and in particular Freya Chambers who deserves the lion's share of the applause for shepherding this landmark policy.

Two things have quickly emerged from our new policy, adopted in Hilary 2020: we have immediately changed our refuse collection contract, and despite a slight increase in cost now have comprehensive

recycling and importantly the ability to track our waste. The Domestic Bursar has been able to source waste bins which conform with our listed buildings but allow casual waste streams to be properly segregated at source. We will now be able to create a baseline for waste and set targets for its reduction. Most importantly, our new contractor sends zero waste to landfill.

We have also decided to investigate building the new Special Collections Centre to Passivhaus standards. Passivhaus is the gold standard for sustainability and is significantly more rigorous than current government standards. While the University also has Passivhaus aspirations, in fact at this point no significant building in Oxford and certainly not one connected to a 16th century Grade I listed structure has achieved Passivhaus standards, so this would be truly ground breaking if we are able to do it. The additional cost is estimated at £500,000, or 5% of the build cost, but we believe the savings over the life of the building occasioned by the minimal requirement for active heating or cooling will at least partially offset the initial outlay (see chart below).

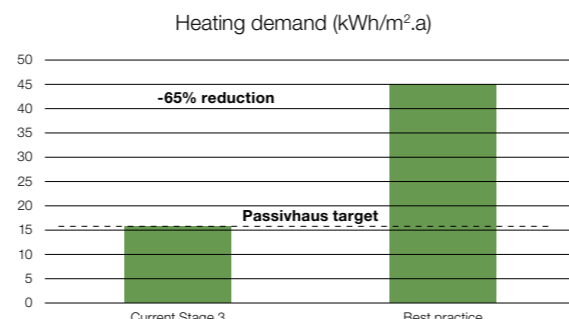
We expect this building to achieve a 53% reduction in CO₂ emissions compared to current best practice construction which is, I think, a remarkable statistic. We also expect the building to benefit from much tighter building controls throughout its construction: this will lead to fewer problems in the future, as buildings often suffer from mistakes made during construction which only come to light years afterwards. Passivhaus requires ongoing inspection and certification throughout construction which will, we hope, mean that we get this right first time with consequent longer term cost benefits.

In conclusion, this is very much the beginning of our sustainability journey. What has been gratifying has been the shared sense of commitment and purpose across all the College constituencies. Sustainability has often been divisive elsewhere but in our case it has been a process where all have felt able to contribute views and to feel that they have had a role in shaping College policy. The result has been a series of important and meaningful decisions which will reduce the College's impact on the environment in future years and permit us to achieve our charitable purpose in a much more sustainable manner.

Nicholas Melhuish, Estates Bursar

Heating Demand

The stage 3 Passivhaus design achieves a **65% reduction** in annual heating energy use compared to the best practice design.



Key facts



Replacing electrical sub mains has substantially reduced power loss across the College's wiring system



Passivhaus design achieves **65%** reduction in annual heating energy



Our new waste contractors send **0** waste to landfill

Film Première

In pursuit of the Fox

Johnny Lyons, Director of *Discovering Isaiah Berlin*, writes about his film in which Henry Hardy (PPP, 1967) tells the fascinating story of how he became Isaiah Berlin's editor. The film premiered at Corpus earlier this year.

At the start of 2017 I began to write a book which I should have written twenty years before. By October of that year I felt brave or foolhardy enough to email the preface of my book to Henry Hardy, a Fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford and editor of the works of Isaiah Berlin (1909-97) – both Hardy and Berlin were undergraduates at Corpus Christi. To my amazement, Hardy responded to my email immediately, asking that I send him the rest of my typescript. And so began an unexpected friendship that reached one of its high points in Oxford earlier this year.

On the evening of 17 January, Corpus Christi held the première of my film *Discovering Isaiah Berlin* which tells the story of how Hardy became Berlin's tireless editor and loyal friend. Their partnership, which was not without its mutual tensions and frustrations, began in the 1970s and, in a way, carries on to this day, more than twenty years after Berlin's death. Luckily for us it has produced over twenty meticulously edited volumes, including four weighty tomes of letters. It is no exaggeration to say that in Hardy, Berlin found his very own Boswell.

The première, which was preceded by a drinks reception generously hosted by the President, was virtually a full house in the College's splendid auditorium. A lively panel discussion took place after the film during which Robert Cottrell, co-creator of the annual Isaiah Berlin Day in Riga, probed Hardy, Richard Lindley, a political philosopher and former student at Wolfson College (of which Berlin was founding President), and myself about Berlin's life,

ABOVE: Isaiah Berlin as an undergraduate. BELOW: 1927 telegram congratulating Isaiah Berlin on his Corpus scholarship.



thought and legacy. The panel eventually gave way to questions and comments from the audience which brought the event's formal proceedings to an appropriately inclusive and interactive conclusion.

The main event coincided with the launch of my book, *The Philosophy of Isaiah Berlin* as well as the publication of the paperback edition of Hardy's critically acclaimed *In Search of Isaiah Berlin: A Literary Adventure*. Hardy added an appendix to the new edition which includes a posthumous letter to Berlin; he had originally written it in 2004 after completing the first volume of Berlin's letters, *Flourishing*.

I should like to end by quoting the final paragraph of Hardy's note to Berlin's shade: "We do miss you, Isaiah. It's been more than six years, after all. But working on your letters is a marvellous analgesic: it enables me to spend much of each day in your company, so vividly do the letters bring you to life. Your Russian-Jewish-British light-hearted seriousness, intelligence and wisdom are models to us all. The other day I was rung by Angela Huth, who is editing a book of eulogies, including yours of Maurice Bowra. She has been asked, somewhat absurdly, to describe each of the contributors in not more than three words, for the book's contents page, and wanted to know what to say about you. The best I could come up with was 'historian of ideas' – dull enough, but at least, I hope, not misleading. This set me thinking what I should say to you now if I too were allowed only three words. The answer flashed into my mind straightaway: *Thanks for writing.*"